

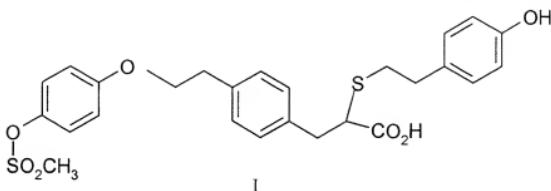
**IN THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

**Listing of claims:**

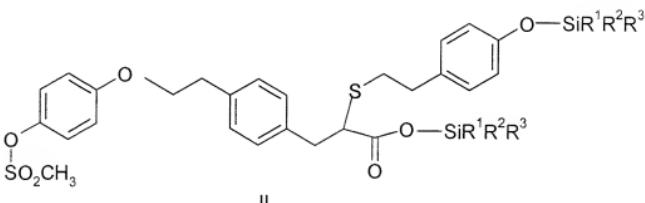
Claims 1-5 (**cancelled**).

Claim 6 (**currently amended**): A process for the preparation of substantially racemic 2-{[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]thio}-3-[4-(2-{[(methylsulfonyl)oxy]phenoxy}ethyl)-phenyl]propanoic acid according to claim 4 comprising reacting a compound of formula I



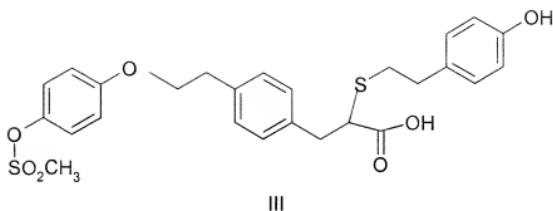
I

enriched in one enantiomer with a chlorosilane of formula ClSiR<sup>1</sup>R<sup>2</sup>R<sup>3</sup> in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>, and R<sup>3</sup> independently represent a C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl group or aryl in the presence of a nitrogenous base in the presence of an inert solvent at a temperature in the range of 0 to 150°C to give a compound of formula II

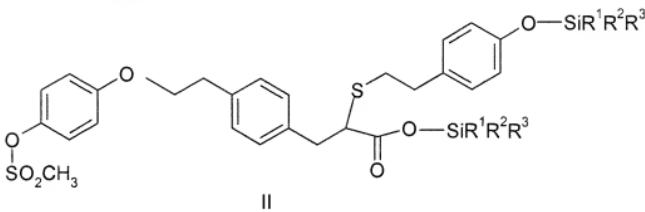


II

in which R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>, and R<sup>3</sup> are previously defined which is hydrolysed to give a racemic compound of formula III

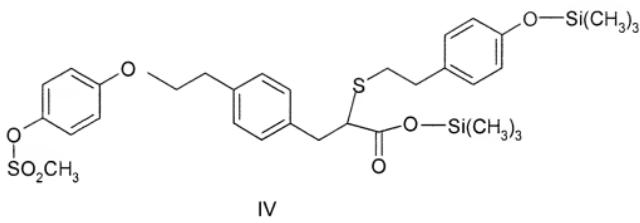


**Claim 7 (original):** A compound of formula II



wherein R<sup>1</sup>, R<sup>2</sup>, and R<sup>3</sup> independently represent a C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl group or aryl.

**Claim 8 (original):** A compound of formula IV



**Claim 9 (new):** A process according to claim 6 wherein the chlorosilane is selected from: chlorotriethylsilane, chlorodimethyl*tert*butylsilane, chlorotriphenylsilane and chlorodimethylphenyl silane.

Claim 10 (**new**): A process according to claim 6 wherein the chlorosilane is chlorotrimethylsilane.

Claim 11 (**new**): A process according to claim 6 wherein the nitrogenous base is selected from 1,8 diazabicyclo[5.4.0] undec-7-ene, a trialkylamine, an optionally substituted pyridine or an optionally substituted imidazole.

Claim 12 (**new**): A process according to claim 11 wherein the nitrogenous base is 1,8 diazabicyclo[5.4.0] undec-7-ene.